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ABSTRACT

This paper identifies particular propositions and claimed empirical realizations that make up the intensification thesis and examines them with regard to their educational applicability, particularly to elementary teachers' workloads. The propositions claimed within the intensification thesis indicate that intensification: (1) leads to reduced time for relaxation; (2) leads to lack of time to keep up with one's field; (3) reduces opportunities for interaction with colleagues; (4) creates chronic work overload that fosters dependency on outside experts; (5) reduces the quality of service by encouraging corner-cutting; (6) leads to diversification of responsibility; (7) creates and reinforces scarcity of preparation time; and (8) is voluntarily supported by many teachers and misrecognized as professionalism. This paper also reports findings from an investigation of the relationship between teacher preparation time and the intensification thesis. Data are presented from interviews with elementary teachers (N=28) in which teachers were questioned about their uses and perceptions of preparation time and about their broader understanding of their work as elementary school teachers outside their scheduled class responsibilities. The study showed that intensification is a real problem for teachers and that it explains many of the changes being witnessed in teachers' work, but it does not fully explain them. More free or preparation time is only a partial solution to the problems. (IAH)

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PREPARE TO MEET THY MOOD?:

TEACHER PREPARATION TIME AND THE INTENSIFICATION THESIS

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Introduction

To say that teachers, like school principals and other professionals, are experiencing problems of increased overload in their work, is neither uncommon nor controversial.[1] But to describe the problem of overload as amounting to an ***intensification*** of teachers' work carries with it considerably more controversy. Claims regarding intensification have become increasingly common in critiques of teachers' work in recent years. This intensification thesis embodies important propositions concerning compression of and changes in the time demands of teaching. Moreover, it is argued, these changes -- which are really forms of work degradation -- are often 'misrecognized' by teachers themselves as enhanced professionalism.

The evidence for the intensification thesis has so far rested on a very small number of single- or two-teacher case studies and empirical support for the thesis, while mounting, can still be regarded as no more than slender. The time is ripe, therefore, to open the intensification thesis to more detailed and wide-ranging empirical scrutiny. Drawing on a recently completed empirical study of how elementary teachers use newly provided preparation time in the school day, this paper examines the implications of what appears to be a critical case for the intensification of teaching -- the scheduling of additional, statutory release time for elementary teachers from classroom responsibilities. Before looking at this study and its theoretical implications, though, I will summarize what appears to be meant by the intensification thesis as it is presented by its proponents.

The Intensification Thesis

In educational writing, the intensification thesis has been developed and applied most extensively by Michael Apple, first in his general book on ***Teachers and Texts***, then in a number of subsequent articles, including one co-authored with Susan Jungck on the implementation of computer-based mathematics instruction by two elementary school teachers.[2]

In this writing, much of the meaning of intensification is drawn from more general critical theories of the labour process. Particularly influential here is a

paper by Larson on the proletarianization of educated labour, on which Apple draws extensively.[3]

For Larson the intensification of educated labour is part of a triple and unholy alliance that also includes narrowing of the sphere of work, along with greater dependence on the bureaucratic whole; and routinization of high-level tasks. These three interrelated components comprise the main changes in the labour process for educated workers that are encountered in advanced capitalistic economies seeking to maintain and advance their productivity and efficiency.

According to Larson, "Intensification . . . represents one of the most tangible ways in which the work privileges of educated workers are eroded."[4] It "represents a break, often sharp, with the leisurely direction that privileged non-manual workers expect"[5] as it "compels the reduction of time within the working day when no surplus is produced."[6] Larson argues that the symptoms or realizations of intensification are varied and include the following:[7]

- reduced time for relaxation during the working day, including "no time at all" for lunch
- lack of time to retool one's skills and keep up with one's field
- chronic and persistent overload (as compared to the temporary overload that is sometimes experienced in meeting deadlines) which reduces areas of personal discretion, inhibits involvement in and control over longer-term planning, and fosters dependency on externally produced materials and expertise
- reduction of the "sociability on which association and community are founded" as time for social interaction is eliminated
- reduction in the *quality* of service, as corners are cut to economize on time

- enforced diversification of expertise and responsibility to cover personnel shortages, which can lead to excessive dependency on outside expertise and further reduction in the quality of service.

Apple's discussion of the intensification of teachers' work draws extensively on Larson's broader analysis of the labour process, and in many respects transplants it directly to the educational sphere. Apple echoes the issues raised by Larson of the intensification process restricting time to relax and to keep up with one's field, along with pervasive problems of chronic work overload, reduction of opportunities for interaction, increased dependence on experts as demands for generalism and 'skill diversification' increase, and decline in the quality of service provided.[8]

Apple argues that intensification is particularly evidenced in teachers' work in the growing dependence on an externally produced and imposed apparatus of behavioural objectives, in-class assessments and accountability instruments and classroom management technologies. This, he says, has led to a proliferation of administrative and assessment tasks, lengthening of the teacher's working day, and elimination of opportunities for more creative and imaginative work -- a development which has occasioned complaints among teachers. In his analysis with Susan Jungck of the implementation of computerized instruction, Apple points to one particular effect of intensification on the meaning and quality of teachers' work -- the reduction of time and opportunity for elementary teachers to show care and connectedness to their students, because of their scheduled preoccupation with administrative and assessment tasks.[9]

In the main, these insights on the intensification of teachers' work, while illuminating, nevertheless arise from rather direct transpositions of Larson's general analysis of the labour process to the educational sphere. But two additional points raised by Apple and others in relation to the nature and symptoms of intensification are grounded much more specifically in analyses of education and teaching.

- First, there is the implementation of simplified technological solutions to curriculum change which compensate "teachers for their lack of time by providing them with prepackaged curricula rather than changing the basic conditions under which inadequate preparation time exists".[10] Scarce preparation time, that is, is said to be a chronic and persistent feature of intensification in teachers' work. Solutions to change and improvement focus on the simplified translation of externally imposed expertise rather than complex evolution of internally developed and shared improvements, along with the time needed for their creation.

- Second, among teachers, "the increasing technicization and intensification of the teaching act . . . (is) misrecognized as a symbol of their increased professionalism".[11] Apple reports that the employment of technical criteria and tests makes teachers feel more professional and encourages them to accept the longer hours and intensification of their work that accompanies their introduction.[12] In an analysis of two elementary teachers and the place of intensification in their work, Densmore notes that "out of a sense of professional dedication, teachers often volunteered for additional responsibilities",[13] including after-school and evening activities. One teacher is described as working "quickly and efficiently so that she could include creative supplementary lessons once required lessons were finished. Her own sense of professionalism together with parental pressures for additional effort, propelled her to increase the quantity of lessons taught."[14]

The way that such teachers voluntarily consort with the imperatives of intensification, it seems, means that "the ideology of professionalism for teachers legitimates and reinforces . . . intensification".[15] These claims about voluntary dedication constituting a misrecognition of intensification as professionalism are particularly challenging to and perhaps even a little demeaning of the meanings and motivations of teachers, and I will return to

them later.

The purpose of this paper, and particularly of the foregoing summary of the intensification thesis, has been to identify particular propositions and claimed empirical realizations which make up the thesis, that can be opened to empirical and theoretical inspection. This, it is hoped, will lead to a process where the intensification thesis is not perceived and applied in a rather monolithic way, but where its validity is openly questioned with a view to establishing either stronger acceptance of the thesis, or serious doubts about its educational applicability, or important modifications in its formulation. This paper ***cannot*** arbitrate definitively on these possibilities. But it is hoped that, through a process of empirically and theoretically grounded interrogation, it ***can*** raise appropriately searching and penetrating questions to help commence the process of theoretical confirmation, disconfirmation or reconstruction that is needed.

To summarize, the propositions contained within the intensification thesis that have been drawn from reviews of the writings of Larson, Apple and Densmore include the following:

- intensification leads to reduced time for relaxation
- intensification leads to lack of time to keep up with one's field
- intensification reduces opportunities for interaction with colleagues
- intensification creates chronic work overload that fosters dependency on outside experts
- intensification reduces the ***quality*** of service by encouraging 'cutting of corners'
- intensification leads to diversification of responsibility and, with it, heightened dependency on experts

- intensification creates and reinforces scarcities of preparation time
- intensification is voluntarily supported by many teachers and misrecognized as professionalism.

Preparation Time: A Critical Case

In September of 1987, elementary teachers in Metropolitan Toronto school boards took strike action in support of their claim for a guaranteed minimum of 180 minutes per week of preparation time. Throughout the province of Ontario, contract negotiations before, during and after this time centred around increased preparation time as a key bargaining issue. At the time of writing, elementary teachers in most Ontario school boards now have a guaranteed minimum of 120 minutes or more of preparation time per week.

Such levels of guaranteed time for elementary teachers away from class are unusual in Western schooling systems, yet they have long been advocated as desirable -- indeed, necessary -- conditions for increased collegiality among teachers, for opportunity to commit to and get involved in change and, more recently, for restricting the process of intensification in teachers' work. A study of the uses of increased preparation time therefore constitutes a critical case for examining the nature and conditions of teachers' work. Does scheduled preparation time lead to fundamental changes in the nature of teachers' work and in the relationship teachers have with their colleagues? Does it generate closer and more extensive collaborative relationships between teachers and their colleagues? Or are the uses of preparation time defined and absorbed by prevailing patterns of work within the teacher culture of a more individualized, classroom-focused nature? Moreover, does the provision of increased preparation time halt or restrict the encroaching intensification of teachers' work? If only in this one geographical region, does it constitute an important empirical and theoretical challenge to the intensification thesis?

In 1988 and 1989, my colleague Rouleen Wignall and I interviewed 12 principals and 28 teachers in a total of 12 schools in two school boards (six schools per board).[16] Using a semi-structured schedule, we collected data on the uses and perceptions of preparation time among these teachers, and also on their broader understandings of their work as elementary school teachers outside their scheduled class responsibilities. We asked questions about teachers' working relationships with their colleagues and about perceived changes in their work and their working environment over the years. Thus, while at the outset we were more interested in exploring propositions concerning the relationship of time to the culture of teaching than we were in testing the intensification thesis, the nature of our questions and of teachers' responses to them yielded data that were highly pertinent to that thesis.

Teacher Time and Intensification

The first set of issues arising from our data concerned the changes, the pressures, the increased expectations that many teachers had experienced in recent years: changes that in a broad quantitative sense would seem to offer some support for the intensification thesis.

One teacher described some of the important ways that teaching had changed for her:

> "Teaching is changing so much. There's so much more social worker involved in your job now than there ever was before. So many problems, behavioural and social problems, that are sitting in your classroom that have to be dealt with before you can ever attempt to start teaching. I don't think a lot of people realize that. . .it's really a changing job. This is my fifteenth year, and since I first started teaching, you can really see horrendous changes. . .and I don't think a lot of people who've never been in a school and seen a school run know exactly what a person puts up with in a day. Then they say: 'What do you need two months off for?'".

The effects of special education legislation and the mainstreaming of special education students into regular classes were particularly strong areas of concern

for several teachers--both in terms of their implications for classroom discipline and their demands on the teacher to provide more diversified programs.

> T. "I know in the beginning, during prep time, there were more teachers who at least had time to take a break, which is sometimes necessary. And now you rarely find a teacher taking a break."
>
> I. "So how do you explain that?"
>
> T "I find my workload now is much heavier than it used to be. I just think that although there are times that I know I need to stop, I can't. I have to get things done. So I think that part of it is the changing expectations of teachers. Large class sizes--I have 29--and when you figure that goes from a Special Ed kid, to enrichment, to ESL, it's a lot of kids that you always seem to be on the tear. I think there's more and more social work going on. If we were to write teachers' descriptions ten years ago, twenty years ago and now, they're vastly different. I think there just isn't the time now for us to sometimes sit down and recuperate."

This teacher went on to describe a number of children and their problems in her class who might once never have been there, being retained instead in a segregated unit.. "You've got all these kids that you never used to have," she said. Nor is it simply a matter of containing them, of maintaining discipline. " We're to meet the individual needs of the kids. Kids don't fail today, really, so we have to keep adjusting the program," she added.

One of the problems for some teachers was not only mainstreaming itself but what they perceived to be scarce and possibly declining in-class specialist support and assistance, to help them cope with and program for the new special needs students. One teacher commented that he had "a very large class," "a low-average class" with two students who were repeating grades which was "very tough, very demanding" for him. The reason for this concentration of ten to twelve "needy" kids in his class, he believed, was because "its easier for the people in the resource department to schedule time into...one class, as opposed to three separate classes." Another teacher pointed out that her para-professional in-class support had been removed because of budget cuts. Therefore she now devotes most of her preparation time to

working with individual special needs students to give them the support they need and help them "catch up."

The changing composition of teachers' classes over the years, then, has had implications not only for discipline and stress but for the complexity of programming and preparation too.

> "You're always being told that you're constantly responsible for the children. You need to know where they are and what they're doing. You have to be able to program for all the different abilities in your classroom. It's not a simple matter of saying--"Today, we're going to read this story!" Its who can read this story and what am I going to do with the kids who can't? And how do I go about getting these kids to answer in complete sentences while I'm getting this child who's sitting in my Grade 4 and can only read at Grade 1--what am I going to give this person to read, because I have to be there to read with her, but I also have to be there to help these children learn how to do this better than what they're doing."

Accountability to parents and administrators increased these senses of pressure among a number of teachers.

> "Especially at this school, we have parents who are very demanding as to what kind of program their children are getting, how its being delivered, how the paper was marked, how the test was marked that you sent home--all kinds of things like that. So I find that you have to be very accountable to them as well as to the kids and to the administration too. So therefore it takes a lot of thinking through ahead of time too, as to how you're going to mark a paper or present something."

Accountability has also brought with it more form-filling and paper work; more accounting for what is being done, what has been done, and what is intended to be done, for the benefit of parents, administrators and other audiences.

"Fifteen years ago I didn't have paper work. Fifteen years ago the paper work I had, I created for myself..."

"The paper work we're getting I'd almost like to give it up. If I didn't enjoy it with the kids so much, I would....What the administration has asked us to do I don't think they have much choice in that either...We have to make plans for everything that we do... We spend so much time sitting and writing out. Maybe that's the way we don't get ourselves into difficulty, I don't know. We have to do a lot of accounting for everything we do..."

"It's a lot different than 25 years ago. Paper work has increased ...the board's gone out with these pink forms in triplicate, class lists....I must spend 10 minutes each day."

"I'm close to 20 years now and I find from the first year to now, the paper work has increased."

"They're forever--this year we've all said the same thing--this year seems to have been particularly bad for conferences and workshops. And they want you to attend this and they want you to attend that; there's this new program and that new program. At one point, we had so many things on our plate for the Grade 5s, we finally said "Call a halt! Forget it!!!....There was one week, I was out of the school more than I was in it!"

"There are people who love meetings. They live for those meetings. I live for a meeting if it's purposeful for me and if it's not, then the meeting is useless and I just cut them right off, which I have done."

These rising demands on and expectations of teachers certainly amount to strong support for the ***intensification*** thesis; as does the combination of high expectations (e.g. individualized programming) with reduced support (e.g. reductions of in-class assistance).

Teacher Time and Professionalism

The high expectations and stringent demands that accompany elementary school teaching did not always clearly emanate from external sources, though.

Working hard was not simply a question of bowing reluctantly to outside pressure. Many of the pressing demands and expectations of teaching often seemed to come from within teachers themselves. So many teachers appeared to drive themselves with almost merciless enthusiasm and commitment in an attempt to meet the virtually unattainable standards of pedagogical perfection they set themselves. They did not appear to need direction or pressure from above to motivate them in their quest. They drove themselves quite hard enough.

Part of the reason for this phenomenon is to be found in the diffuse definitions and expectations that attach to teaching in Ontario and other similar systems. Comparative studies of the teacher's role by Broadfoot, have indicated that in France, for instance, the teacher's role is defined tightly and clearly as being specifically concerned with academic learning and performance in school.[17] Teachers there, Broadfoot points out, are consequently more certain about their role and more satisfied with their performance. In many other places, like Great Britain and North America, though, the role is defined and perhaps increasingly being defined ever more widely, encompassing social and emotional goals as well as academic ones, concerns for the child's welfare at home as well as its performance in school and so on. Goals and expectations defined and understood in such diffuse terms become difficult, indeed impossible to meet with any certainty, yet dedicated elementary teachers strive hard to meet them. As Flinders puts it:

> "More so than other occupations, teaching is an open-ended activity. If time and energy allowed, lesson plans could always be revised and improved, readings could always be reviewed again, more text material could always be covered before the end of the term, students could always be given more individual attention, and homework could always be graded with greater care."[18]

The teachers we interviewed talked a lot about their work in these terms. When describing their uses of preparation time, they reeled off activity after activity, giving an urgent, frenetic sense of how densely packed, how compressed that time was, "The time goes really fast," said one. Others remarked that the list of what they do and what they can do "just goes on and on! "Its endless," "You can always do more." "There are never enough hours in the day." "There's always something I could be doing because I am never

finished." In some cases, work became almost an obsession, threatening to overwhelm them. Some stayed late, until after 5.00, so they would not need to take their work and therefore their problems home with them. One had been counselled by his principal to ease back on the work and give more time to his personal life, to his leisure. Many, particularly the women with families, spoke wistfully about wishing they could give more time to themselves; "time for me," as they put it.

There were so many dedicated teachers who gave generously of their time and effort to their work, to the students in their charge. The vast majority took work home in the evenings, taking it out after supper, or once the children had gone to bed. The extraordinary lengths to which their commitment stretched, stands out in many individual cases. There was the teacher who regularly stayed on until 6 or 7 o'clock, even in winter after the heating had been switched off, when he had to wear his coat and bustle around doing activities that would keep him warm. There was the teacher who spent over a $1000 of her own money over the summer, on materials and resources for her class. There was the teacher who came to work in his portable every Sunday and the teacher who came in one Saturday for several hours a month to sort out the staffroom bulletin boards. There was the single parent teacher with a handicapped child who dashed home at the close of school, two days a week, to take her child for specialist help, who then returned to cook the supper, to read to both her children and put them to bed--finally taking out her schoolbooks to start all over again after 8.00 or 9.00 o'clock at night. There was the teacher who had been widowed young, had brought up her children alone, and had commonly worked from 9.00 until 11.00 or midnight after they were asleep--and who was only now, in her middle age, choosing to ease off a little, reduce her commitments somewhat as she felt she had "paid her dues" in the past and now deserved the opportunity to develop a life with her new husband. There was the teacher who had shelves and bookcases at home packed with materials and resources that she had made and accumulated over the years. There was the teacher who spent his Sunday mornings compiling tests, quizzes and worksheets on his word processor. There were the teachers who were taking additional qualifications in computers, or visual arts or teacher librarianship; the teachers who coached sports team and refereed House Leagues, the teachers who involved themselves with the choir or organized school charities. The list, as one of the teachers said, is endless.

The time and effort these teachers commit to their teaching and preparation comes not so much from grudging compliance with external demands as from dedication to doing a good job and providing effective care within a work context that is diffusely defined and has no clear criteria for successful completion. This internally generated dedication in the context of a diffusely defined occupation seems to be grounded in what both Woods and Nias call professional and vocational commitments, commitments that are grounded in the kinds of meanings and purposes that teachers attach to their work.[19] It is churlish, and perhaps also theoretically imperialist, to dismiss these deeply held commitments and their consequences as merely belonging to a pattern of 'professionalism' that misrecognizes and legitimates the intensification of teachers' work.

In these patterns of commitment and care are to be found important modifications to the intensification thesis. The patterns are in principle independently determined, although in practice they intersect and interlock with patterns of intensification in mutually reinforcing ways to produce the kinds of work-centredness that are so vividly portrayed in the foregoing teachers' accounts. As Poppleton and Riseborough conclude, from their study of work centrality among 686 English secondary-school teachers, "work centrality is a function of the circumstances, ***either acquired or self-imposed, that produces heavy workloads.***"[20] In similar vein, Acker's analysis of British primary teachers' responses to the National Curriculum concludes that, while "there were certainly signs of intensification and the manipulation of teachers' commitment to professionalism"[21] with teachers making heroic efforts to comply with new expectations, nevertheless "the teachers do not yet appear to experience their work as deskilled, nor are they subject to technical control by curricular forms in the way Apple describes."[22] Moreover, Acker adds, she is "loath to dismiss their perceptions as false consciousness: their skill feels real to them and looks real to me."[23]

The Profits of Preparation Time

Against these tendencies towards increased workload and pressure, to which intensification has contributed significantly, the advent of preparation time has introduced a measure of compensation and easement.

Some teachers remarked that many parts of the public probably did not understand what teachers do with their preparation time, or how important it is to them, given the changing nature of the job. When asked if there was anything he would like to add at the end of the interview, one teacher ventured:

> "The only thing that I was going to say was that -- how much better it is for me now than it was. Receiving that prep time is really important. I know a lot of people- -I think my mother-in-law for one of them--sort of wonder what I do during that time... I just think she really doesn't have any idea, because she's never in--(I don't say that meanly because...she knows that I have a lot of work to do)--- but I think she wouldn't understand, and a lot of people wouldn't understand that it is really nice to have that time when they've been in the situation or know somebody who is."

Airing similar concerns about not being fully understood, another teacher commented:

> "I just think it is very important for people to understand that ....the job does not start at 8.40 in the morning and end at 3.30...We have a lot of parent volunteers and they all say to us ---but we had no idea how much you do!"

Teachers reported that increases in preparation time had conferred important benefits on the quality of their work in general and their instruction in particular. First, they pointed out that increased preparation time had been important in reducing stress. Second, it helped restore something to their lives outside teaching, enabling them to give a little more time to their families, to their leisure, to themselves. Together, these two things helped improve teachers' temperament in the classroom, they argued, improving the quality of interaction they had with their classes. The following quotations give some

sense of this commonly noticed relationship between stress, wider life circumstances and classroom temperament.

> "It (preparation time) eases the stresses of the job, because all of that planning or duplication would have to be done after school time when you have everybody in the school after the same machines, so you're not waiting your turn for something to become available to you."

> "I feel that this year, I'm very much more relaxed. I don't get that same feeling of stress. For instance, having them first thing in the morning, if I've got something I particularly want for that day even, I have time to do it instead of coming in at 7.30, which for me is a real bonus not being an early morning person."

> "I think it's (preparation time) is very vital, because if a teacher is too tired out, too tired and too overworked with homework you are not at your best when you are in contact with the children. Your nerves get a little short. Your children soon pick that up and its not a good learning atmosphere. I think it's crucial to keep your mental and physical health, and having sufficient time to do the work that you have is a large component."

A third point is that in addition to relieving stress and creating space in other parts of the teacher's life--in addition to making existing work easier, that is--preparation time for many teachers also enables them to do things better. It enables them to be more organized, to be better prepared. For instance:

> I think I'm more organized, and the fact that if there is something that's coming up, I know that I have that time tomorrow to do it in, so that I can do it at that time, rather than staying after school or putting that time in after school, or doing it at a lunch time. I can do it during my prep. time. It's nice."

> "It's most invaluable. Phone calls. For example, you get busy lines and so on. If you're just trying to do it quickly in between classes, it's impossible. And little things like looking over your notes and seeing--looking through my files and seeing what activities I can use to help this group of kids who are having

> difficulty. Those are invaluable. You just don't have the classroom time to sit down and say 'Wait' to the kids while you try to find a file for somebody that evening. You just cannot use the time enough."

Preparation time, according to some teachers, also allowed them to do more things, to take on a wider range of activities than they had before. Before preparation time, said one,

> "I didn't do as much. I didn't run as many House Leagues. I wasn't involved with as many activities after school because I was just so busy doing all these other things. So I think the preparation time made me a more efficient person during the day. I can get more done between 8.00 and 4.00 than I could before."

For a number of teachers, the benefits of preparation time were to be found not in time for extra-curricular activities, but in the extra investments they could make in the business of instruction within their own classes. For these teachers, preparation time helped them improve the inventiveness and appropriateness of their pedagogy. They were more able to make games to teach an idea rather "than give a child a piece of paper to write, push a pencil around on." Many teachers also talked about marking, about how preparation time helped them evaluate students' work more effectively.

> "I don't feel I have to do quite as much rushing at lunch hour to get materials ready and get work marked. I like to mark my work at school so I don't carry big bundles of books home, for one thing. And it's nice to mark it as soon after the kids have done it as possible, so they can see what their mistakes are. If it hangs on for a day or two, it is not as effective."

> "I feel it's crucial to have the children's work marked as soon as it's done. I get it back to them as soon as possible, because if you leave it two or three days---"what's this?" It's like a week old to children."

Preparation time can be seen as a way of providing teachers with working conditions that are designed to help them catch up with the diversification and changing requirements of the job. Certainly, many teachers spoke vividly

about the changes in their work and were unequivocal in their praise of preparation time as a way of helping them cope more effectively with these changes. Preparation time here seems like a clear gain for teachers: a counter to the process of intensification. This is certainly how Ontario teachers' organizations involved in collective bargaining viewed the issue of preparation time when it was in dispute. According to the president of the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation, "quality education for our children and teachers is what is at issue and, without guarantees of adequate preparation time, that ***can't*** be obtained."[24] The president of the Federation of Women Teachers of Ontario affirmed this view when she said:

> "Until we have a serious proposal [on preparation time] that addresses these needs of children, we're at a state of impasse because we as teachers care about the students we teach and we're not about to throw in the towel and give up on the students."[25]

The Perversities of Preparation Time

Preparation time, it seems, can alleviate stress and increase the opportunities for relaxation. It helps reduce chronic work overload and leads to opportunities for the planning and preparation of more creative work. In these respects, preparation time helps counter the effects of intensification. It may even help reverse the spiral. The very existence of preparation time, in fact, constitutes a major challenge to the intensification process.

But even the long-called-for introduction of increased preparation time for elementary teachers does not reverse all the effects of intensification and can to some extent be absorbed by them. The preparation time study revealed four ways in which such additional time did not always lead to restrictions of the intensification process.

First, increased preparation time did not necessarily enhance the processes of association, community and collegiality among teachers. Time itself was not a sufficient condition for collegiality and community. As I have documented elsewhere, unless there was a commitment to collaborative working relationships at the level of school or school district leadership, preparation

time became absorbed by the deep-seated culture of individualism and classroom-centredness that has become historically and institutionally ingrained in the prevailing patterns of teachers' work.[26]

The immediacy of the classroom, its centrality within the teacher's world, and the multiple demands it placed upon the teacher for diversified programming and preparation that would be rationally accountable to others--all these things made most teachers predominantly classroom-focused and classroom-centred in their actions, their thoughts and their preferences. They were practical and classroom-focused inside their own classrooms--naturally! But in many respects they were also classroom-focused outside their classrooms too, concentrating their energies on what would best and most immediately benefit their own students, by preparing materials, ordering resources, marking promptly, and so forth.

Flinders remarks that "isolation is an adaptive strategy because it protects the time and energy required to meet immediate instructional demands."[27] The same can be said of teachers' individualistic uses of preparation time. Indeed, even within one of the boards where there was a system-wide commitment to collaborative planning, a number of teachers referred to preparation time not scheduled for consultation with colleagues as "my time", as time they could use directly for the benefit of their own students. Preparation time was considered too precious and too scarce to fritter on activities like relaxation or casual conversation with colleagues. These things were more likely to take place at recess. Hardly any teachers stated that they used preparation time for relaxation. There was simply no time for this. There were too many things to do. As one teacher put it: "If you make the mistake of getting into a conversation with somebody, then it's (the prep time) done".

In the majority of cases, preparation time was a way of coping with the immediate demands of instruction as they affected one's own students.in the context of internally driven and externally imposed expectations which were high in standard yet diffuse in focus. Preparation time was precious. It was "my time", the teacher's own time, to be focused on the short-term practical

requirements of the teacher's own class. Time spent in other ways was regarded as wasted time: a distraction from the central task of classroom instruction. Preparation time, therefore, did not automatically assist the process of association between teachers and their colleagues.

A second, somewhat perverse consequence of preparation time was that an important minority of the teachers interviewed stated that, while they appreciated the preparation time they had now received, they probably did not want the further amounts for which their federations were fighting in order to move closer to the working conditions of high-school teachers. What was at stake for these teachers was the continuity of the relationship they felt they needed with their classes and the quality of care which that relationship would enable them to provide. The ethic of care was a powerful source of motivation and direction for these teachers--not surprisingly given the importance of care as a key reason among elementary teachers for entering teaching, and given its pervasiveness as a central moral principle among women more generally.[28]

Ironically, while preparation time to a certain extent assisted a process of disintensification in elementary teachers' work, there appeared, for some teachers, to be a point where the law of diminishing returns set in; where further additions to preparation time ***reduced*** rather than ***enhanced*** the quality of classroom service provided, because this drew teachers away from their classrooms too much. The data supporting these observations have been reported extensively elsewhere, but the words of two teachers capture the prevailing sentiments here:[29]

> "I don't think I would like to be away from them too much more, unless it's the same teacher. Even the one teacher that does come in, unless I specifically state what I want, the children don't work as well for her as they do for me."
>
> "I think when they're talking about prep time--I had a letter put in my mailbox the other day and apparently there's some elementary teachers that are in quite a flap, because they are teaching ten minutes longer than the senior school teachers who are teaching

> (Grades) 7 and 8. And they want this justified. They want that time. And I'm thinking: 'What are you here for? Teaching the kids, or trying to find out how much time they don't have to teach them?"

A third teacher summed up the fundamental dilemma and the way she chose to resolve it:

> "I wonder if I had much time away if I would feel I was losing something with the kids."

These remarks reveal a classroom commitment to quality of care, a professional and vocational commitment that cannot be summarily dismissed as a 'misrecognition' of trends towards intensification in the labour process of teaching. On the contrary, these teachers recognize there is a point where it is not so much intensification as disintensification that threatens the quality of service they can provide. For these teachers, concerns about the quality of care superseded ones about the costs of time, even when opportunities to improve the latter were available.

A third perversity of preparation time is to be found in the preferred arrangements for preparation time cover. Teachers we interviewed preferred what can be called ***segregated*** cover arrangements, where a colleague comes in and teaches a self-contained specialism for which he or she holds complete responsibility. ***Integrated*** cover, where what is taught in preparation time forms part of a wider class program for which responsibility is shared to some degree between the class teacher and the covering teacher, was viewed much less positively. There were several reasons for this.

First, segregated cover saved time. A self-contained program required no prior preparation by the classroom teacher and no consultation with the covering teacher. It was the covering teacher's sole responsibility. In these conditions, there was no need to prepare for preparation time itself.

Second, some teachers had concerns about shared rather than personal accountability. They were worried they might not be able to provide a good or a reliable account if they shared responsibility for an "important" subject with a covering colleague. As one teacher put it,

> "One of my things that is a pet peeve is that when I talk to a parent I want to know that what I'm telling them is something I've seen with my own eyes, that I know is a truth and I've seen it. If I'm not there, I don't feel that I can comment on that, even though I've had feedback from the person (the covering teacher)."

Closely related to these concerns about accountability were further ones about expertise, which preparation time exposed. One principal put it like this:

> "Primary teachers feel OK about handing their kids... across to somebody who they know can teach particular things better than they can. But what they already know they themselves can teach well, then it's trickier."

" We will all be better served," he said, if we can provide teachers "with a sense of comfort and satisfaction that what's going on back there (in their classes) is good and valuable." "We don't feel discomfort," he went on, "sending somebody off to French. It's just not there because its assumed competence. And it's assumed incompetence on my part if I send my kinds to you." Therefore, he argued, preparation time is best covered through specialist subjects like music, which are "highly visible, highly valuable."

This was certainly the preferred arrangement for preparation time cover among teachers. They readily acknowledged the specialist expertise of particular colleagues who could teach a specialism better than they could. And they recognized the value of giving students access to this greater competence. Through exchanges of expertise, the clumsy could ensure their students got access to good quality physical education. Groaning male baritones could secure better quality teaching in singing and in music more generally. The teacher trying to improve her own visual arts expertise by upgrading her

qualifications in the area, could meanwhile have this part of the curriculum taught by another specialist during preparation time. Sharing classes where both teachers' expertise in the chosen subject was adequate or strong, however, exposed differences, and raised doubts about whose expertise might be weaker; doubts that teachers preferred to keep suppressed.

These problems of accountability and expertise that were exposed by the administration of preparation time sometimes led to covering teachers who were responsible for sharing "important" subject like mathematics with the class teacher, being assigned routine drills of a safe, self-contained nature. This did little to assist the quality of classroom instruction. More usually, as I noted earlier, teachers searched hard for subjects they disliked or in which they were weak, which colleagues could cover. Where expertise in the covering subject was strong, this arrangement appeared to work well. The separation of powers between the classroom teacher and the covering teacher was counterbalanced by a collegial respect for complementary subject expertise. But where expertise in the covering subject was weak, the segregated pattern of cover appeared to undermine rather than enhance the quality of instruction. In some cases, this was not perceived as a problem. Of a teacher covering for physical education, for example, it was said that the program guidelines were clear. "It was all set up" and needed no extra preparation. Yet one wonders how far such apparently slavish following of written guidelines would affect the quality of instruction. Interestingly, Apple and others attribute such patterns of teacher dependency and technical control to the processes of intensification in teachers' work. But here in the context of preparation time, such patterns and the shortfalls in quality that result from them, appear to come from seemingly contrary processes of disintensification.

A case of cover in Health education serves as a striking example. The classroom teacher was keen for this area of the program to be covered. It was self-contained, and in a French immersion system where she was involved with only half the program anyway (the other half being taught by the French teacher), finding such self-contained areas for cover was not easy.[30]

"I wanted to give the Health, because that's a whole subject in

> itself and it works very well into a short time period. Health lessons can be presented and completed in a 40 minute period."

Against the advantages of its being clearly bounded, though, problems arose with selecting this subject as one to be covered. For one thing, there was once more an apparent over-reliance on published guidelines.

> "There is a Junior Health Course, and most topics such as dental health, disease, whatever, are presented in Grades 4, 5 and 6, but the objectives change somewhat for each age level, although there is a fair bit of overlap. I gave them (the covering teachers) sections out of the core and I asked them to be responsible in presenting it to the kids."

In a split grade class, especially where the teacher was strongly dependent on published guidelines, there were also serious difficulties of programming appropriately for each part of the split.

> "She tries to cover it with one class. She takes the same core and she will take, depending on the unit and how delicate it is, she might take the objectives from the Grade 6 core or the Grade 5 core and try and blend them a bit. So that's probably the hardest."

In particular, avoiding duplication of the program from one year to the next with split grade students was something achieved more by accident than design:

> "The topics are the same (between grades). It would probably be a different teacher and... for example, there's an objective at the top of the page and there are several different ways of attaining that objective. So the chances of them choosing those same activities to meet these same ends are quite low. So they might say to themselves—"sounds familiar"—but they won't be doing the same thing, and they'll be a year older and they'll be looking at it from a different perspective."

As this teacher further concluded, "it's not the ideal situation."—especially,

one might add, where subjects like health education address important social and emotional goals and depend on close, continuous, open and trusting relationships between teachers and their students. Again, the perversity of preparation time is that in some cases it can lead not to improvement but deterioration in the quality of service offered to students, and to deskilling rather than reskilling of the teachers involved.

The fourth perversity of preparation time is that while its absence inhibits association among teachers, its presence by no mean guarantees such association. More than this, the kinds of association that are created in the spaces afforded by preparation time may not always be those that enhance teacher development and empowerment. Elsewhere, I have provided extensive data to show that in terms of increased association among teachers, preparation time can help create or reinforce ***either*** collaborative cultures ***or*** contrived collegiality in the school community[31] . ***Collaborative cultures*** are a relatively rare occurrence. They comprise more spontaneous, informal and pervasive collaborative working relationships among teachers which are both social and task-centred in nature. They involve teachers having high responsibility to develop things themselves as a community, the outcomes of which may be relatively unpredictable from the point of view of school and system leadership. And they entail forms of leadership that support and facilitate these collaborations on an ongoing basis, rather than controlling and constraining them. In conditions of ***contrived collegiality***, teachers are scheduled and required to meet with their colleagues for administratively determined purposes such as liaising regularly with the special education resource teacher, or engaging in joint planning of new units of work with grade partners. The purpose of collaboration here is less one of evolutionary teacher development, than of implementing system initiatives or the principal's preferred programs. Contrived collegiality is more controlled, regulated and predictable in its outcomes. In the study reviewed here, it constituted the dominant pattern of teacher collaboration in the context of preparation time.

More important than the existence of teacher collaboration and collegiality,

then, is its meaning. From the point of view of preparation time, a particular concern is that many teachers and their federations may be at risk of becoming trapped in a Faustian bargain where, for the worldly riches of "extra time", they ultimately trade something of their professional souls, their control and discretion over how such time is to be organized and used. In this respect, one of the key choices surrounding preparation time appears to be between "preparing to meet thy personal mood" or "preparing to meet thy professional doom"!

Conclusion

What have we learned from this investigation of teacher preparation time and its relationship to the intensification thesis?

First, many of the recent changes that teachers described as occurring in their work are highly compatible with the intensification thesis and offer considerable support for it. Heightened expectations, broader demands, increased accountability, more 'social work responsibilities', multiple innovations, increased amounts of administration and meetings—all are testimony to the problems of chronic work overload documented by Apple and others. Pressure, stress, no time to relax, no time even to talk to colleagues,—are all effects that teachers mentioned which again are highly consonant with those of the intensification process. Particularly before the advent of preparation time, many aspects of intensification appear to have been at work in the labour process of teaching, even in the relatively materially favoured environment of Ontario.

There are some qualifications to make to this finding, of course. First, the timescale over which teachers reported changes that were consonant with intensification is a relatively short one of only five or ten years. Evidence over longer time scales is not available in this study, and even when it is inferred from other historical work, it is not always convincingly supportive. For instance, many studies of teaching in the nineteenth century indicate that in quantitative terms, teaching may have been just as hard and demanding as it is

now.[32] In qualitative terms, it may also have been less rather than more skilled.[33] Certainly, as Densmore acknowledges, claims and inferences that intensification is part of a long, linear process of degradation in teachers' work, are difficult to support through longer-term historical study. The appropriate timescale for intensification and its validity claims therefore remains a matter of open debate.[34]

Second, the evidence of this study is that of reported and retrospective evidence rather than evidence collected longitudinally. Given that such evidence comes from retrospective accounts of individuals, it is also difficult to disentangle ***historical*** changes in the labour process from ***biographical*** changes in the life and career cycles of teachers over time when maturation may bring more responsibilities, or declining physical powers a sense of reduced capacity to cope.[35]

Thirdly, intensification may not impact on all teachers in the same way. It may be felt particularly keenly by those teachers who are, because of their own commitments, or work circumstances (e.g. full-time rather than part-time), rather more work-centred than their colleagues.[36] And it may be felt less keenly by others.

Fourth, my own evidence along with that of other writers like Acker suggests that by no means all instances of broadened commitment and heightened professionalism can be explained in terms of the intensification of the labour process, or as 'misrecognition' of that process.[37] Professional commitments to improving the quality of service for clients are often real ones, pursued by teachers themselves in a social context of growing complexity and challenge. These commitments extend far beyond processes structured to extract increased productivity from teachers' work. They are not exclusively reducible to labour process factors.

These four qualifications do not disconfirm the intensification thesis, but they do raise doubts about its scope and singularity as an explanation of changes in teachers' work, suggesting that further inquiry is needed in which

other theories and perspectives in addition to those concerned with the nature of the labour process may need to be acknowledged as important for our understanding.

The second broad lesson we have learned concerns the potential of preparation time to alleviate many of the problems of intensification, and even to create some elements of disintensification. Preparation time has fulfilled some of its promise. Shortage of time to do and develop things that would enrich their work is a common complaint of teachers and is a key component of the intensification process. Teachers in the preparation time study saw the provision of such time as relieving stress, giving them back a personal life, allowing them to 'do more', to contribute more to extra-curricular activities, etc. and to improve the quality of their planning and instruction. If only in the short term (for we have no longer term evidence), preparation time really does appear to help disintensify teaching and to help improve some of the quality of service teachers provide. Its introduction is more than merely cosmetic. In both professional and collective bargaining terms, the benefits it confers appear to be real and worth fighting for.

But preparation time is no panacea. It issues no guarantees. It offers only opportunities. Preparation time can be used for purposes other than its promoters intended, and the organizational contingencies surrounding its implementation can yield a range of unintended consequences that cannot easily be explained within the parameters of labour process theory. Preparation time, that is, has its perversities as well as its potentials. This is the third lesson we have learned from the study.

Beyond a certain point, increases in preparation time reduced rather than improved the quality of service provided to students, as teachers were drawn more and more away from their own classes into other areas of work. Handing over compartmentalized pieces of the program to covering teachers could also create dependency on published guidelines and with it subject teachers to those very patterns of technical control which proponents of the intensification thesis ironically attribute to the absence of preparation time, not to its presence.

Lastly, when preparation time was used in the context of mandated or ***contrived collegiality*** and collaborative planning, this could create a proliferation of meetings and additional work that intensified teachers' work still further, and subjected them to administrative control instead of releasing them to develop things themselves.

These perversities point to the unanticipated ironies of complex bureaucratic systems which hold within them only yet more problems for every new solution that is offered. The unintended system consequences of French immersion programming, split grade responsibilities, local distributions of expertise and the like are important, are not easily predicted and are not reducible to labour process explanations. But in addition to the unanticipated consequences of preparation time, we have seen that this promising if perverse innovation can also itself serve as a new terrain for traditional struggles for control between administration and teachers and between bureaucracy and professionalism more generally. In this sense, struggles surrounding preparation time and the Faustian bargains that are at stake within them, may not so much solve the problems of intensification as displace the conflicts over intensification and the control of teachers' work to other levels, and sites.

Time can seem and has seemed an easy solution to the problems of intensification and change. Perhaps the confidence expressed in the solution of increased teacher's time away from class has to some extent been a result of the perceived unlikelihood of its implementation! Sometimes, our problems only really begin when our wishes come true. This paper has shown that intensification is a real and serious problem for teachers and their work. It explains many of the changes we are witnessing in teachers' work. But intensification and labour process theories more generally do not fully explain what is happening in teachers' work. Our understandings of such work cannot solely be reduced to labour process theory. While time as an antidote to intensification can provide some of the solutions to the problems of teacher development and teachers' work, it can be just as much a source of further problems as well. Reform is often guided by the belief that every problem has a

solution. Perhaps the real challenge of reform as a continuous process, though, is acknowledging that every solution has a problem. In this sense, intensification is an important but not the only source of problems with teachers' work, and time is only partly a solution to it. Sincere commitments of a professional and vocational nature among teachers that amount to more than 'ideological misrecognition', the increasingly complex nature of society in the postmodern age and the necessarily widening demands it places on education and educators, the complexities and unanticipated consequences of large bureaucracies, and the displacement of struggles about intensification to new sites even when time has been provided as an antidote to it -- these things too must be considered.

Notes and References

[1] For a summary of the arguments concerning teacher overload, see Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A. *What's Worth Fighting For?—Working Together For Your School*. Toronto: Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation, 1991.

[2] Apple, M. *Teachers and Texts*. New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986; Apple, M. and Jungck, S. You don't have to be a teacher to teach this unit: Teaching, technology and control in the classroom. In Hargreaves, A. and Fullan, M. (Eds.), *Understanding Teacher Development*. London: Cassells and New York: Teachers' College Press, 1991.

[3] Larson, S.. M. Proletarianization and educated labour. *Theory and Society*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1980, 131-175.

[4] Larson, *op cit*, p. 165.

[5] Ibid, p. 166.

[6] Ibid

[7] The following is an interpretive summary of Larson's work concerning intensification as described between pages 165-170 of his paper.

[8] See for example, Apple, *op cit*, note 2, pp. 41-45.

[9] Apple and Jungck, *op cit*, note 2.

[10] See Apple and Jungck, *op cit*, note 2, p. 54.

[11] Apple, *op cit*, note 2, p. 45.

[12] See also Popkewitz, T. and Lind, K. Teacher incentives as reforms: Teachers' work and the changing control mechanisms in education. *Teachers' College Record*, Vol. 90, No. 4, 1989, pp. 575-594.

[13] Densmore, K. Professionalism, proletarianization and teachers' work. In Popkewitz, T. (Ed.), *Critical Studies in Teacher Education*. Lewes: Falmer Press, 1987.

[14] Ibid, pp. 148-149.

[15] Ibid, p. 149.

[16] Hargreaves, A. and Wignall, R. *Time for the Teacher: A Study of Collegial Relations and Preparation Time Use Among Elementary School Teachers*. Final report of a project funded under Transfer Grant 51/1070, Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1989.

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[18] Flinders, D. J. Teacher isolation and the new reform. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, Vol. 14, No. 1, Fall 1988, p. 23.

[19] Woods, P. *Sociology and the School*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985; Nias, J. *Primary Teachers Talking*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989.

[20] Poppleton, P. and Riseborough, G. Teaching in the mid-1980s: The centrality of work in secondary teachers' lives. *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1990, pp. 105-124. Quotation from p. 122.

[21] Acker, S. Teachers' culture in an English primary school: Continuity and change. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1990, pp. 257-273, Quotation from p. 270.

[22] Ibid, p. 270

[23] Ibid

[24] Quoted in *The Toronto Star*, September 24, 1987.

[25] Quoted in *The Toronto Star*, September 27, 1987.

[26] Hargreaves, A. Individualism and individuality: Reinterpreting the culture of teaching. *International Journal of Educational Research*, Forthcoming, 1991b.

[27] Flinders, *op cit*, Note 18, p. 25.

[28] See Hargreaves, A., 1991(b), op cit, Note 26, also Neufeld, J., Curriculum reform and the time of care. *Curriculum Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 2, forthcoming 1992.

[29] These and similar data are discussed more extensively in Hargreaves, A., 1991(b), *op cit*, Note 26.

[30] For those readers unfamiliar with the Canadian educational system, in French immersion schools, many or all subjects are taught in French, the chosen language of instruction, which is not the first language of the students. In many such schools, the program may be divided into two different groups of subjects, one set of which will be taught in English, and the other set in French.

[31] See Hargreaves, A. Contrived collegiality: The micropolitics of teacher collaboration. In J. Blase, (Ed.), *The Politics of Life in Schools*. New York: Sage, 1991(a).

[32] See, for example, Curtis, B. Building the Educational State: Canada West. Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1989; Tomkins, G., *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum*. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall, Canada, 1986; Prentice, A. From household to school house: The emergence of the teacher as servant of the state. *Material History Bulletin*, Vol. 20, 1984, 19-29.

[33] See all references in Note 32.

[34] Densmore, K., *op cit*, Note 13.

[35] On such career cycle issues, see Huberman, M. Teacher development and instructional mastery. In Hargreaves, A. and Fullan, M. (Eds.), *Understanding Teacher Development*. London: Cassells, and New York: Teachers' College Press, 1991.

[36] See Poppleton and Riseborough, *op cit*, Note. 20.

[37] See Acker, *op cit*, Note 21.